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Animated Space

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In March 2013, I was on an evening Eurostar train from London to Brussels, on my way to a two-day European Research Council meeting. For most of the journey, our coach was quiet and calm, with passengers absorbed in their newspapers, resting, talking quietly, gazing into laptop screens, or soothed by headphone music. An atmosphere of place produced by the merging of circulating sounds, silent activity, movement of the train, darkness outside, occasional tapping, and sedate lighting enveloped us all, but it did so in the silent mode and as part of the collective unconscious, leaving each of us immersed in our own activities, thoughts, and feelings. We were both together and apart, leading our separate lives and by no means a public, but nevertheless sharing a space whose ambience and dynamic was of interest to all of us in terms of our collective safety, comfort, and chances of arriving at our destination on time. We could become a public if the occasion arose.

And it did. Approaching Lille, a sound shattered the silence, and in the minutes that followed, we were all pulled into the same affective space and the same set of concerns. A man let out a loud and prolonged groan, one that prompted the usual anxiety on a train with British people on board that the man was drunk and about to become a nuisance, which in a British way we would do nothing about and put up with in a bad mood. Instead, quickly following the groan, the man convulsed with spasms, passed out, and slid off his seat into the corridor. A passenger sitting opposite put him in recovery position once someone in the coach shouted out the instruction. The emergency was announced on the intercom, and soon a heart surgeon and two nurses—we learned from their conversation—appeared, to attend to

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the patient. After what seemed like an interminably long period, the man regained his breathing and eventually his consciousness and was whisked off to a hospital in an ambulance when the train rolled into Lille a few minutes later.

During the emergency, the coach had become a singular space, its charged atmosphere a beckoning, suspending private interests, forming a public of shared concern. The public space had become an event, its atmosphere and its new body/ space rituals displacing earlier ones around a shared ethic of care (and, I suspect, collective interest in how things would end): orchestrated by the eyes turned to the space where the man lay, the loud voices and interventions of the volunteers trying to bring the man round, the train guards speaking into their phones, the ambulance staff talking to the man and his helpers at the end of the episode. Across the coach, the eye and the ear fell on the same spot, and the heart and mind into a sensorium of hope for the vulnerable body and solidarity with the health workers and train staff. The eventfulness of space, until then humming in the background and secondary to private pursuits, became plainly manifest, its "sonorial cartography" allowing "another story and unsuspecting landscape to emerge," as Iain Chambers (2013: 5) claims for the Mediterranean area defined through its mixed Arab and European musical genres.

True to the frequently changing moods of public space, this "another story" lasted only for the duration of the emergency. Once the man left, the coach returned to its previous state of ambient togetherness and individual separateness. Quickly— perhaps too rapidly—people resumed what they had been doing before, with hardly any discussion of the event. The moment of common cause had passed, but perhaps not without trace. The calm that ensued was no return to the state before the incident, for it now had the feel of a palpable sense of relief and shared vulnerability. Each of us dealt with the echoes of the incident in different ways: I with the help of a soulful raga by the Indian classical singer Kishori Amonkar that happened to be playing on my iPhone. Others found their own way of absorbing the drama and reflecting on it. Soon, the train pulled into Brussels and the coach emptied out, as did its atmosphere. I caught up with the surgeon, who when I thanked him lightly placed his hand on his heart as is often done in the Middle East, and we and the others scampered in all four directions to get to the next destination, back into our private bubbles in public space. The possibility remains, however, that the memory of an occasion when differences were crossed, expertise was pooled, and solidarities were formed to good effect will linger in the unconscious of those who witnessed the event.

This kind of account of sociality, emphasizing its changing character and intensity and tying it to the choreography of bodies and to the atmosphere of place,

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rarely makes its way into received wisdom on the sociality and politics of (urban) public space. The history of this received wisdom is littered with ambitious expectations that continue to endure even in an age of collective culture made in other sites of social gathering and political organization. One of these is the expectation that the free and conducive mingling of strangers in streets, squares, parks, and other shared spaces fosters a culture of civility and civic responsibility. In the city's public spaces, the individual and anonymous subject is said to become a social subject, learning to navigate shared space, negotiate difference, and recognize the commons. Another inclination has been to think of public spaces, especially those of symbolic or historic significance, as sites of political formation. Public assembly is considered to enable the articulation of collective concerns and the acquisition of discursive skills and political voice, turning the anonymous subject into the deliberative citizen, collective actor, and political claimant. Those particularities of time and place that have produced stray outcomes tend to be judged as departures from the true potential of urban public space, reason if anything to reorder the architecture of the spaces, rather than to reconsider the expectations.

If contemporary scholars and planners of the city continue to think in this way, it is generally without much regard to the many other sites of deliberation and socialization that now exist, including the collectives of organized and informal politics, education and learning, mass media and communication, consumption and public culture, and virtual, symbolic, and affective association. The cultural and political pushes of markets, states, parliaments, bureaucracies, telephones, television, film, print and social media, religion, nation, and other spaces of attachment tend to be neglected in their own right and in terms of how they inflect social dispositions and orientations in urban public space. The sociality and politics of the street or square are not considered to be vestigial or exceptional, secondary to or qualified by these other collectives, shaped by the multiple geographies of association and attachment that course through a given public space. The situated is understood to be that which is of that place (Amin 2012).

Ironically, even then, much of the richness of place is filtered out, in the desire to interpret urban public space as civic and political. The life of the street, shopping mall, and bus is shoehorned into dualisms of private and public, shared and appropriated, civility and incivility, tolerance and intolerance, conformity and dissent. The plurality of things happening, the changes occurring over the course of the day, the many different pursuits and affects of the people gathered, the resonances of the still architecture and silent infrastructure, the amplifications of the amassed bodies and entities, all tend to get squeezed out or forced into these dualisms. The independent eventfulness of place becomes secondary, eschew-

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ing important considerations such as how human being itself is shaped in the occupancy of public space (although Simmel 2002, Park 1952, and Sennett 1992 are notable exceptions) or how the composite ecology of human and nonhuman interactions in a public space works on sociality and political orientation and in ways that are far from straightforward. The liveliness of urban public space as a distinctive kind of habitat is lost.

Yet to stand in a busy city anywhere in the world is to be surrounded by so much that might turn out to be formative: the private mingling with the public and the commercial with the noncommercial; the rub of humans, technologies, buildings, infrastructures, animals, and nature; the many human acts of preying, praying, lingering, passing through, watching, and listening; the amplifications of intersecting bodies, objects, matter, symbols, smells, and sounds; the rhythms set by callers, clocks, codes, timetables, technologies, and official and unofficial guardians of a public space; and the asynchrony of repetition, emergence, and novelty following from the latter impulses and combinations. The busy street or mall presents as a space of multiple happenings, influences from near and afar, continuous ebb and flow, more than human resonances. This multiplicity is visible in all its informality, overflow, and excess in the cities of the South, but it is no less intense in the cities of the North. The jostles may be quieter, the competition less fierce, the disorder more regulated, and the entities less diverse in the public spaces of Boston and Birmingham, England, but the ontology of plurality is the same as in Bamako and Bogotá, only less visible, more ordered. In both kinds of city, the ecology of public space is rich, its inhabitation germane to sociality and citizenship. The reciprocities of habitat and sociality are evocatively illustrated in Filip De Boeck's (2012) observations on how publics form around infrastructure in the streets of Kinshasa:

> Kinshasa is a city where formal urban planning and architecture have been almost non-existent, and where the remaining material infrastructures, certainly public ones such water supply, electricity, road infrastructures, public buildings (administration, schools etc.), are mainly present in their absence; or better, their functionings are, more often than not, punctuated by constant breakdown, by lack, by paucity, by failure and fragmentation, by recycling and repair. As such they generate many shortcomings and impossibilities, but also different opportunities, different kinds of space, also, that are important subjects of query. Potholes or pools of water on a public road, to give but one example, may become infrastructural elements in themselves, because they create thickenings of publics, and offer

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the possibility of assembling people, or of slowing them down (so that one might sell something to them along the road, for example).

This article approaches public places in the city as a body/space performance, to conclude that no obvious civic or political outcomes can be claimed. It does, however, agree that sociality is reworked in significant ways in the human occupancy of a space that is shared with many sentient others (human and nonhuman) and which possesses its own convening powers as a place of gathering. It links civic orientation, the affects and dispositions of people, to spatial orienteering, the bodily experience of a multiple sensory field stretching and exceeding individual skills and capabilities. The resonances of this play between practices of occupancy and interpellations of place, the last part of the article argues, also qualify the politics of public space—their imprecision and immanence, for example, parsing the politics of deliberation and dissent that is said to have returned to the street in the wake of uprisings around the world against centralized market and state power.

Sociality of Public Space

For some time now in urban studies, cities have been imagined in relational terms, as topologies of many intersecting entities, networks, and flows whose combined force shapes urban development (Amin and Thrift 2002; McFarlane 2011; Farías 2011). The city and its spaces are imagined as a "complex adaptive assemblage" (Dovey 2012: 349), a gathering point of plural geographies of association, whose multiple logics and recombinant dynamics generate urban outcomes that are at one and the same time recursive and emergent, regulated and unplanned, and stable and changing. This is especially so for the everyday street, shopping mall, or square in which many human and nonhuman entities interact and in which a host of temporal and spatial logics come together, making them juxtapositional spaces (Massey 2005) poised between transparency and opacity, order and disorder, cohabitation and conflict, and continuity and change. The public space emerges as a force field in its own right, one in which the play between bodies, objects, and matter, between divergent patterns of use, occupancy, and demand, and between many time-space conjunctions acquires agency. The individual elements, whether humans, machines, buildings, or material flows, are placed in a dual sense: first, as meaningful only in the full range of their interactions and, second, as performed through and by the composites of place.

Here the habitat occupied, with all its situated multiplicities and passing flows, is seen to be actively involved in the making of urban sociality, revealing civic

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culture to be shaped by more than the cognitive and precognitive practices of mingling strangers. For example, these practices themselves are seen to be extended beyond the body in the form of thinking machines such as mobile phones that work on personal affects and orientations in quite strong ways by adding virtual stimuli to physical ones (Thrift 2014). More significantly, the built and technological environment is revealed to be anything but inanimate, with its lively couplings of cable, matter, map, code, hardware, and algorithmic intelligence compressed into buildings, street technologies, and transport and utility systems shown to provide background services, sensory stimulations, and cognitive selections that influence people's material well-being and affective outlook (Mackenzie 2010; Shepard 2011). Thus conceived, sociality arises in the embodied experience of an environment in which thinking and feeling are shaped by the interaction between sentient bodies, technologies, and environments.

It follows that civic orientations in public space flow from this interaction, its many possible permutations making it almost impossible to name the outcome with any precision. Even the street or square known to be orderly, civil, calm, unruly, dangerous, seditious, or chaotic has its countercurrents—the unforeseen disruption, the unnoticed and hidden goings-on, the changes that take place between day and night. The affective variegations are not reducible to the label, precisely why any attempt to claim the culture of urban public space as civic or otherwise is fraught with difficulty. The label conceals more than it reveals, its singularity a better reflection of the predilections of the urban designer keen to engineer a particular place aesthetic or of the urban scholar trained to think public space as *demos* and *civitas* than of everyday social life in the streets of Boston or Bogotá. A safer assumption would be to acknowledge that urban public space has a summoning effect on human beings and sociality, but not one whose impact on sociality can be predicted.

In large measure this summoning is done by the visible and invisible technologies that orchestrate public space: the traffic and lighting systems, the visual displays and hidden monitors, the supply networks and design arrangements that arrange the space, regulate movement, monitor conduct, facilitate supply, and in general make up so much of the built environment. How these technologies affect psychological and emotional states has long been recognized in urban writing, typified by work that speaks of the shock, awe, alienation, discipline, excitement, or possibility generated by the modern city, encapsulated in the work of Charles Baudelaire, Charles Dickens, Walter Benjamin, Georg Simmel, Friedrich Engels, Jane Jacobs, Lewis Mumford, Louis Wirth, Richard Sennett, Guy Debord, Patrick Joyce, and Elizabeth Wilson. Urban technologies, and more broadly the

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hyperengineered built environment, are seen to influence sociality in a call-and-response way—the human altered by the nonhuman. Interestingly, though, in the context of the software-aided city, a new genre of writing on sociality has arisen that finds the distinction between the sentient human and the conditioning environment too restrictive.

This writing conceptualizes the informatics-saturated public space as a habitat of distributed sentience, with humans alone no longer doing the thinking and acting as diverse kinds of capability form in chains of computational intelligence linking mobile devices, electronic sensors, mathematical models, software code, and sophisticated computing. It sees this "code/space" (Kitchin and Dodge 2011), absorbing data from everywhere in a public space, including smart devices grafted on bodies, street technologies, public infrastructures, machines, buildings, shops, and offices, both saturating physical space with sensory intelligence and immersing it in a much wider remote field of thinking and acting. The "smart" body, street, square, or building bristles with sensory capability and with intelligence gathered from a multitude of sources. It is no longer the inert background in which humans do the imagining, organizing, and sensing. As Mark Shepard (2011: 10) notes, the software-aided public space, "imbued with the capacity to remember, correlate and anticipate," tangibly foreshadows the "near-future city capable of reflexively monitoring its environment and our behaviour within it, becoming an active agent in the organization of everyday life," calling on human intervention from time to time.

This active agency works on human subjectivity itself. It is not just a matter of experiencing place selectively, virtually, and alongside immersion in other social worlds, so that the spatially proximate becomes distanced or relativized, as many studies of new corporeal technologies suggest. Nor is it just a matter of humans becoming less autonomous, once observed and ordered by corporations and authorities privy to information scanned from credit cards, Internet usage, mobile phones, and roving cameras, as many studies of urban surveillance suggest. At stake is the reordering of social identity as a reciprocal exchange between thinking bodies, machines, and environments. Wireless subjects in the wireless public space do not act and feel through their own bodies alone. Moving through the monitoring and calculating space with smartphones that offer a personalized map, along with images, sounds, and conversations that mingle with those of the city, their civic orientations are formed in the intersections of personal biography, locational experience, and wireless dwelling (Mackenzie 2010). The subjects are immersed in multiple sensory fields possessing "their own kinds of vitality, capacities of repetition, variation and adaption, that in turn feed back into the

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becomings of sentience" (Fuller 2011: 181). Their civic orientations are formed in the gap between the body and its exterior where the sensory fields of varying spatial reach overlap (Thrift 2014).

One of the consequences of the virtual animation of the body/space relationship is that cultural summations cannot be reduced to the characteristics of place. If a street or square turns out to have a civic or democratic feel to it, we cannot be sure that this is a reflection of bodily choreography or place aesthetic. We have to take into account the entire spectrum of situated material culture, including manners and dispositions formed in the social use of public services, intelligent infrastructures, wireless communications, and technological prosthetics, as well as the general atmosphere created by diverse affective geographies intersecting in a place, including social temperaments affected by discourse toward strangers and minorities in the national media or political arena (Amin 2012). We have to think of the street or square as a space of circulation and encounter of the near and afar and, for this, one that produces cultural summations that wax and wane in intensity, give way to other relational combinations, incorporate distant resonances, and, for all this, shape sociality in the most indirect of ways. The wireless street or square might turn out to be civic despite the behavior of people within it and democratic by virtual rather than proximate association. Technology, which has always structured the built environment and made its presence felt through the provisions enabled and the aesthetic altered, is now becoming an intimate, habitable space and a means of amplifying the sensorial capacities of subjects and surfaces, closely crafting sociality in public space.

Does this imply, therefore, that the cultural anthropology of the nonautomated public space is much more intercorporeal, subject-centered? It is generally assumed that in urban areas with rudimentary technologies, poor infrastructures, and failing bureaucracies, humans do the heavy lifting: parsing without prosthetics and developing skills of improvisation, acuity, and frugality to survive an inhospitable habitat. If writing on the smart city places technology and the habitat on the inside of human being and sociality, writing on the poorly serviced city places them on the outside, generally as an impediment to fruitful living and civic engagement. Poor neighborhoods, overcrowded spaces, and desultory facilities are narrated as shared environments that urban dwellers learn to negotiate, survive, or improve through their own efforts. If they shape sociality, it is thought to be in negative ways—harsh and contested surroundings prompting feral, opportunistic, watchful, and aggressive behavior (Whitehouse 2012). Subjects, technologies, and habitats are treated as incompatible outsides, and positive social propensities such

as conviviality, solidarity, and citizenship are explained as traits of character or community in places of material lack.

But there is another invisible college of ethnographic writing that reveals sociality in the nonautomated city to be equally of the habitat and agency very much an entanglement of mind, body, machine, and matter. It discloses a multidimensional humanity in much the same way as the literature on the smart city. The habitat, however rudimentary, is shown to perform its users through the sensory encounter, its aesthetic and morphology understood to stimulate affective reactions that accumulate as "perceptual memories" of well-being and experience (Degen and Rose 2012: 3271). Buildings, streets, signs, and sites emerge as mnemonics, tacitly steering spatial awareness and social judgment, simultaneously numbing conscious decision making and heightening sensory awareness (Hiss 1991). The codes equipping individuals with a "careful way of moving, of acting, of getting up and down the streets" (Anderson 1999: 23) and the attendant social manners are shown to arise from bodily familiarity with street signals, allowing, for example, danger to be sensed from how groups of people gather or where pavements narrow, lights dim, and cars slow down. Ethnographies of fringe urban spaces such as cemeteries, derelict parking lots, and unused parks are beginning to uncover similar reciprocities of culture and environment, for example, offbeat social groups sharing the habitat with animals and unusual plant species, with their alterity amplified by this proximity (see Gandy 2012).

These kinds of ethnography force us to reconsider the makers and markers of sociality in all urban public spaces, in the manner of twentieth-century theorists such as Simmel, Robert Park, Mumford, and William Whyte, who recognized the interdependencies of ecology and civic culture in the city. They rule in nonhuman inputs and social outcomes that disturb the reduction of public spaces in received wisdom to jousts of civility and incivility or democracy and dystopia. They make it unsurprising that vernaculars of magic and witchcraft might play their part, as De Boeck and Marie-Françoise Plissart (2004) show in their account of the culture of public space in Kinshasa. In the congested spaces everybody and everything, for all kinds of intentions, lives out in the open, and beliefs of haunted places and bewitched subjects allow the city's many street children to stake out a claim without reprisal, live with courage among the dead in cemeteries, and escape into a dreamworld of spirited adventure at night.[1] The magic token warding off spirits, the tree sheltering the car repair venture, the pothole attracting hawkers, the sign

1. On urban occult in the West, see Pile 2006; on the noir in Delhi, see Sawhney 2009.

announcing the Second Coming, all are part of the mangle making urban public culture so vicariously plural.

If in the technological city the social negotiation of this plurality includes bodily engagements with diverse intelligent entities, with repetitions settling around a particular spectrum of social affects, elsewhere other forms of bodily awareness are implicated, with similar affective percolations. This is clearly shown by writing on urban public space as sensorium. One example is Charles Hirschkind's (2006) portrayal of how the solicitations and rhythms of taped sermons heard in the streets and cars of Cairo momentarily turn the hurrying and harried subject into an ethical subject and member of an imagined community. Another is Martyna Sliwa and Kathleen Riach's (2012) illustration of how the smells of disinfectant and boiled cabbage or of perfume in new supermarkets on the streets of Kraków frame social judgments of the contemporary everyday by triggering nostalgic or negative feelings toward the city's communist past and hopeful or anxious feelings toward a future in liberal Europe.[2] The sensorial stimuli of urban public culture are also vividly captured in *River of Smoke*, Amitav Ghosh's (2011) novel about British, Indian, and Chinese jostles in the expanding docklands of Canton before the Opium Wars, where visual, aural, and nasal appraisals of street life played a considerable part in forming rituals of spatial orientation and social judgment.

The sensorial is no substitute for the technological, however, in the making of public culture in the city of modest means. For one, the sensorial fields cited above are shot through with technological objects and infrastructures such as loudspeakers, cassette players, cars, stoves, buildings, chemical products, engineered surroundings, barrels, pipes, scents, ships, warehouses, and energy supplies. The technologies are intimate to practices of sensing, feeling, and evaluating, as we are beginning to understand from a new style of technosocial ethnography of poor urban settlements. Even in the most makeshift neighborhoods—generally treated as spaces of pure human endeavor in the prolific literature on slums—new and old technologies are central to social and cultural life. This centrality is clearly illustrated in Ravi Sundaram's (2010) study of life in Delhi's poorest neighborhoods, in the form of habits learned to live dangerously with cars, bikes, rickshaws, and carts in narrow alleyways; basic needs met by pirated technologies carrying water and electricity; and opportunities and hopes sustained by televi-

2. On market smells helping multiculturalism in contemporary London, see Rhys-Taylor 2013; on the cooking smells of immigrants reinforcing racist prejudices in late nineteenth-century New York, see Riis 1914; on odors and the French social imagination in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century city, see Corbin 1996.

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sion, radio, mobile phones, and the Internet.[3] No longer does "technology" appear as an exception—the rarity in the form of social media and smartphones used by drug dealers and criminal gangs to alter the culture of place.

These accounts of diverse urban settings show the intricacies of social identities and cultural practices formed in the interactions of the (more than human) body and the animated environment. Simmel (2002: 17) intimated this reciprocity a century ago, when he described the emerging "metropolitan type" as someone with an identity that "does not end with the limits of his physical body or with the area to which his physical activity is immediately confined, but embraces, rather, the totality of meaningful effects which emanates from him temporally and spatially." The experience of public space, thus, is not confined to the nature of interactions between strangers. As Peter Sloterdijk (2011: 140) explains: "Where the paths of individuals cross in everyday interaction . . . they do not normally lose their composure merely through a glance at the individual. It is more likely that this act of seeing will assure the seer of his secure position in the middle of his own surrounding space; it affirms him in his distantial, non-merging forms of intercourse with the protagonists and opponents who populate his human environment." Individuals maintain their composure because the landscape thought to be dead is anything but that and is instead, as Nigel Thrift (2014) argues, a space of "outstincts" spread across sentient bodies, infrastructures, and technologies regulating the balance between civility and incivility.

"Politics" of Public Assembly

To think the culture of public space in this way—as a recursion between the sentient body and the sentient environment that works on human sociality precognitively and distantially—has implications for how we conceptualize the politics of public space. The world over, people continue to gather in streets and squares to air grievances, share experiences, and make claims. And they do so not only in societies in which political and social institutions are rudimentary or antidemocratic but also in societies used to outlooks being formed in schools and colleges; interests being advanced through legislatures, associations, and workplaces; political life being conducted through governments and parliaments; and opinions being expressed on radio, television, and the web. From time to time, strangers who normally brush past each other or exchange glances, pleasantries, and words become publics with distinctive collective identities, demanding political change,

3. On the ties between infrastructure and people enabling "incremental living" in "incremental environments" in Jakarta, see Simone 2014.

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venting social frustrations, confronting the authorities, rallying around a cause. The return of mass mobilizations in city centers of the North and South against dictatorship, austerity, social injustice, autocracy, privatization, cruelty, war, and destruction is a timely reminder of the continuing political role of urban public space. The occupations and insurgencies confirm the shortcomings of designated politics and the potentiality of public assembly.

But what exactly is the nature of this potentiality? How does space shape the political moment, to continue the analysis developed above in relation to sociality? Traditionally, the emphasis has tended to fall on the act of assembly itself and in the claiming of public space as countercommons. In the latter are said to be forged practices of citizenship, solidarity, and agonistic or antagonistic engagement, a kind of schooling in political becoming based on the experience of direct democracy (Harvey 2012; Merrifield 2013). In the former are said to be crafted experiments of communal ownership and collective living based on claiming public land for squatting, gardening, eco-housing, alternative consumption, and so on, in the midst of the privatized, commodified, and profit-oriented city (Vasudevan 2014). Curiously, though, body/space dynamics have not featured much in the treatment of public space as political, possibly because much of the collective mobilization is in the minor key—dispositional, rather than directly political, silently regulating collective orientations, rather than through conscious acts of organization. In what follows, based on albeit a brief analysis of prosaic and eventful spatial moments when a collective will prevails, I suggest that there is merit in considering body/space dynamics, for they simultaneously amplify and dampen the collective moment.

The Eurostar journey I opened with perfectly illustrates the ambiguity of the collective moment among strangers in public space. The solidarities built around the ailing passenger quickly evaporated, yet the choreography of place in the form of ambient mood and remembered echo lingered in the collective unconscious, perhaps with prepolitical force. Such ambiguities explain why the coming together of strangers in public space does not automatically produce a culture of citizenship, deliberation, or dissent, maybe even prompt the thought that when such outcomes are evident, something of the spatial choreography, and not just intersubjectivity, has played its part. But then, what of the times when public spaces do become expressly political, for example, when they are staging grounds for campaigns to raise political awareness or become occupied for revolutionary intent? Does the choreography and mood of place contribute to and perhaps even qualify the mobilizing, or is it superseded by it? My suggestion, through the examples that

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follow, is that here, too, body/space interactions that exceed the intersubjective, and configure distinctive atmospheres of place, remain of central importance.

Market Square in the center of Durham in northern England is anything but a political square, but over the years it has seen its fair share of public campaigning. One campaign has involved a group of peace activists returning to the square over thirty years to protest against diverse injustices, including mine closures, nuclear arms escalation, violence against women, apartheid in South Africa, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, repression in Palestine, and the destruction of the natural environment. In some years, the protests addressed strongly felt local issues, such as Margaret Thatcher's government's coal pit closures or its infamous poll tax, requiring little orchestration to attract public support. On many more occasions, however, they addressed hidden or faraway injustices, seeking to connect people in a university-dominated working-class town to people and places under threat in some remote part of the world. Success required reaching out to an unknown, and possibly skeptical or indifferent, public, from a stall staffed in frequently adverse weather by a small number of activists in a square busy with shoppers, tourists, and people passing through.

Market Square had to be made political, and in an affective way. An important political technology was the campaign banner, invariably painted in an imaginative manner by Lotte Shankland and other local artists (Amin, Baker, and Casselton Clark 2009). In the busy square with multiple interests, many activities, and hurrying pedestrians, the banners became a key political actor, a trademark object. They staged the event, for they were no ordinary makeshift but works of art that captured the attention of the passerby. The artists knew that the colors, the design, the lettering, and the choice of words had to be perfect (e.g., "Ask the cormorants if the Gulf War isn't all about oil," "An eye for an eye makes everyone blind," and "Vital statistics: 27.5% of all women are raped during their lifetime"). They sensed that the banners, displayed in an everyday public space, could not preach or proclaim but instead could show people something they might not know, tap into a common sense of fairness and justice. The well-crafted banner would leave a trace in the memory of people passing by, perhaps even draw them into respectful conversation with the activists and each other over a potential matter of common concern. And so it was, whether the numbers gathered were small or large. The campaigning involved less of active citizenship in public space than the staging of an event, in this case around a charismatic technology in the tradition of many reform movements of the past that invented new tools and assemblies to disrupt established practices serving narrow interests (Amin and Thrift 2013).

The choreographed event worked by lodging visual and ethical dissonance into the many other interests and flows of the square, opening a space of social reflection around the banners and leaving a trace of conscience in its wake. Its politics had little to do with the qualities of social assembly and interaction in public space. Instead, like so many other instances of public campaigning, it had everything to do with interrupting the everyday rhythm and visual iconography of place, making a corner of the shared space eventful, and altering the experience of public space. The political moment lay in the entanglement of aesthetic form, material culture, and everyday practice, in the reorganization of the phenomenology of place, nudged in particular ethical and affective directions by the words of the activists, the messages of the banners, the conversations had or heard, and the images lodged in the mind. If the campaigning drew on public space for its effectiveness, it did so by altering its geometry, slowing it down in a certain sense, and engineering an atmosphere of social concern. All this it did until the space returned to itself, but perhaps not the persons who experienced the moment.

I think that something similar can be said about the clamorous public space, which has once again become the site of popular rebellion, now against the exclusions of neoliberal capitalism and the injustices of authoritarian rule. The twenty-first century has begun with political grievances increasingly fought on the street, prompted by widespread frustration over unmet needs and destroyed hopes, abuses of power, escalating injustice, inequality and destruction, and the failings of established political procedures, in turn sustained by solidarities amplified through the digital commons (Castells 2009). The streets of the city and the Internet have become the parliament of dissent, opposition, and difference, often the only site of resistance to the combined force of powerful corporations, governments, and elites, as official oppositions in designated political arenas cower in the wings of conformity, fearful of electoral defeat or ridicule in a pro-establishment media. The Arab Springs, the Occupy movement, the protests in Southern Europe against austerity, the uprisings in Ukraine, and the demonstrations against wasteful state expenditure in Brazil are the emblems of the new politics of insurgency, their rebellious public spaces tangible expression of the unthinkably revolutionary in a corporatized twenty-first century, much to the glee of anarchists and anticapitalists, the horror of corporate interests, and the dismay of antipopulists.

Perhaps these exceptional outages, staged after all in the most symbolic urban spaces of collective national memory and identity, do speak to the theorization of public space as demos, the outdoors of political formation and struggle (Douzinas 2013). Taksim Square, St. Paul's, Zuccotti Park, Tahrir Square, the central Maidan in Kiev, and countless other iconic urban spaces are increasingly framed in these

terms. It would indeed be an omission to not see these spaces as profoundly politi-cal, especially when their occupation has been long and loud enough for a counter-public to be formed, for habits of living and lives to be altered, and for new tactics of struggle and agendas of collective being to be honed. Here, too, however, the centrality of the relationship to space, of how space itself is occupied, appropri-ated, and contested, needs to be acknowledged. Space making, as W. J. T. Mitchell (2012: 10) suggests, is a crucial aspect of political formation and struggle, "linked to the trope of *occupatio*, the tactic of anticipating an adversary's arguments by preempting them, taking the initiative in a space where one knows in advance that there will be resistance and counterarguments . . . a demand in its own right, a demand for *presence*, and insistence on being heard, before any specific political demands are made; a demand that the public be allowed to gather and remain in a public space" (emphasis in original).

Once again, the choreographing of place presses for recognition in explaining the politicized public space. In Mitchell's reading of the recent insurgencies, for example, occupation involves the remaking of squares and parks into lived spaces marked by new shared conversations; communal forms of living, sharing, and organizing; mixes of daily living with campaigning, celebrating, and clamoring; and occupying space democratically, frugally, experimentally. For him, the poli-tics of place has been about "showing this world in its actual presence as a nascent community" and turning space into a place of "fullness and plenitude" (Mitchell 2012: 10). In the rearrangement of the topography of public space lies the politics of foregrounding a counterculture of living together, making decisions, occupy-ing space, making another way visible to power (Corrigall-Brown 2012; Harcourt 2012). Other examples of public space "warmed up" in this way will have similar choreographies of place that need to be acknowledged.

To embark on such an account, however, is also to be open to other textures of place, including those that delimit or defy the achievements of clamorous occu-pancy. Inevitably, the insurgent squares and streets empty out, change back to other uses and atmospheres, are reclaimed by the authorities, and often reengineered to prevent future insurgency. Different body/space dynamics step in, swiftly making the politics of *occupatio* seem out of place, a moment passed. In this sense, the liveliness of the politicized space is not that different from that of the eventful train journey or the quiet political campaign taken to the streets. Here, too, the coplacement of strangers yields an ambivalent potentiality: on the one hand, full of promise to insurgents and vested interests that the event can be staged again to unsettle the status quo and strengthen cause for another world and, on the other hand, a hollow promise if the occupation passes without tangible returns, reforms,

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or rebalances of power. As Asef Bayat (2013: 47) ruefully observes of the North African uprisings: "Two years after the fall of the dictators in Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen, not a great deal had effectively changed in the states' institutions or the power bases of the old elites." In the return to the status quo and central power strengthened, the fickleness of space will have played its part.

A politics of the event confined to itself and to its traces, forgotten by the space in which the event took place, has to fold into a politics of amplification sustained by instituted reinforcements in order to gain traction. Otherwise, it risks becoming a politics of dark in-betweens, a symptom Ben Rawlence (2012) reserves for a war-torn Congo divided into and sensed as only a space of local settlements, with people gathering in public spaces around radios that speak of only local and nearby affairs but never of things happening elsewhere in Congo. The national space is the dark in-between, "like a sea" in which each settlement is "a little island community unto itself, with its own radio, market and military command. People may have news of nearby islands but beyond that, nobody knows" (ibid.: 71). Perhaps today's islands of insurgency can be conceived in the same way, for while modern wireless communications enable everyone everywhere to know of an event, the institutional in-betweens remain dark, their uneventful sites of political delivery such as the law, parties, parliaments, government policies, constitutions, representative organizations, and the mass media lying beyond the reach of the insurgents and jealously guarded by the elites in control. This is a politics of clamorous places having to resonate without the silent in-between of an instituted commons (Amin and Thrift 2013).

Conclusion

This article has sought to extend a tradition initiated by Simmel that emphasizes the reciprocities of habitat and human behavior in urban public space, by reflecting on how the resulting atmospheres of place inflect sociality and politics. The effects have been found to be strong but without fixed direction, certainly without proof of civility and citizenship or their opposites as commonly assumed in thinking on the culture of public space. The perspective developed has echoed Sloterdijk's (2011: 90) supposition that "the spaces that humans allow to contain them have their own history—albeit a history that has never been told, and whose heroes are *eo ipso* not humans themselves, but rather the topoi and spheres as whose function humans flourish, and from which they fall if their unfolding fails." One reason for the analogy is because the public space of multiple body/space entanglements functions as both a sentient and summoning environment

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actively involved in the making of the urban subjectivity and political orientation, but more as an evanescent mood than compulsion. The culture of public space has been found to be located beyond the intersubjective and before the social and political fixed more firmly, that is, in the animating middle of strangers—human and nonhuman—placed in close proximity.

In this middle, it is not as though humans move about as automatons, dwelling unthinkingly. As Alva Noë (2012) argues, dwelling involves the skillful negotiation of space with the help of a series of tacit or learned skills, honed through practice and experience, conscious and unconscious behavior. This is precisely why urban strategies to inculcate particular behaviors through adjustments to the topography of public spaces can never be sure of the outcome. The bodily training is circuitous and far from reflex-like, precisely why the history, for example, of multiculturalist intervention to temper animosity and foster civility between strangers by reworking the aesthetic of encounter (e.g., in mixed-use, pedestrian, cultural quarters) is one of checkered achievements. Making public spaces "charismatic crossings" (Carter 2013) between strangers requires additional thickening of the recursions between the sentient subject and the sentient environment, such that the skills of dwelling and the cajolements of the environment become one and the same. How to engineer this is not at all self-evident, but what seems clear is that strategies to reduce the subject to automaton or responsible citizen will not suffice.

That intelligence and agency may be embedded across the skin of the city opens new possibilities for action in the backfill of the deliberative. Designs to make public spaces charismatic crossings could reflect on the nature of the city as a sensorium that reinforces solidarity and care, on the tempo and pace for social attentiveness in the city, on the technologies of sociability—the "*participatory* objects, settings, devices and stuff . . . that in a particular situation come to play a role in the enactment of public participation" (Marres and Lezaun 2011: 493; emphasis in original). Before resorting to the anger of the crowd or to the conscience of the subject to put right the wrongs of the dystopian city, possibility might be found in the atmospheric feel of public space, with its ambiguities cajoled toward the civic ends with the help of sensors that can vocalize the cries of the polluted landscape, artworks that can visualize the violence of centralized power or the connectedness of infrastructures, sounds and smells that can encourage communal feelings, architectural designs that yell out incompleteness, ambiguity, and experimentation. Perhaps this is the stuff of the public space revved up for democracy.

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